

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF
CRIMINAL COMPLAINT AND ARREST WARRANT

I, William S. Hairston Jr., being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

1. I, William S. Hairston Jr., am a Special Agent with the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and have been since July 2014. Before my employment with ATF, I obtained a Master of Arts degree in Criminology from Georgia State University. I am a graduate of the Criminal Investigator Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia. I also completed the ATF Special Agent Basic Training Program at the ATF Training Center. During my tenure as an agent, I have participated in and personally conducted investigations involving violations of these laws, which have resulted in arrests and prosecutions of individuals who have committed these violations of federal law.

2. The information contained in this affidavit is based upon my personal observations and investigation, information relayed to me by other special agents and/or other law enforcement agents, as well as official reports of law enforcement. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of securing an arrest warrant for Elijah Chase GORLA, I have not

included every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I have set forth only the facts that I believe are necessary to establish probable cause for GORLA's arrest.

3. On or about July 20, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m., Watauga County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) deputies were at 421 Fairfield Lane, Blowing Rock, NC 28605 to respond to a 911 call. Prior to officers arriving at the scene, Lisa Gorla (Elijah GORLA's mother) had called 911 and informed dispatch that GORLA was bipolar and had access to a firearm. Dispatch advised deputies that they also heard arguing in the background.

4. Upon arriving at the scene, a deputy observed GORLA running out of the back door of the residence and dropping a shotgun on the ground. GORLA was observed running up a hill into the neighborhood. Some time later, deputies were able to locate GORLA.

5. Lisa Gorla advised that GORLA stated that he was going to shoot himself with the shotgun. Deputies also observed that the firearm was loaded until it was cleared by Deputy Greene.

6. Salvatore Gorla (Elijah GORLA's father) advised that GORLA is bipolar and may not have been taking his medication. Salvatore Gorla also stated that GORLA had been committed in the past for his mental health issues. Salvatore Gorla went on to state that he had seen GORLA with the

shotgun on that day (July 20, 2020) and that GORLA had told him that he had purchased the shotgun from a friend. Lisa Gorla stated that GORLA was in possession of the firearm and was threatening to shoot himself when she called 911.

7. When Deputy Miller inspected the shotgun for a serial number, he observed that the serial number had been obliterated. When asked about what happened to the serial number, GORLA replied that his friend told him to scrape off the serial number. GORLA stated that he did not know why his friend advised him to obliterate the serial number. The firearm was then seized by the Watauga County Sheriff's Office.

8. On July 6, 2021, ATF Special Agent William Hairston test fired the Armsco, 12 gauge shotgun, bearing an obliterated serial number and determined that it was an operable firearm, and therefore met the definition of a firearm in 18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(3).

9. ATF SA Mike Newsome, an interstate nexus expert, made the determination with the information that was provided in reference to the Armsco, 12 gauge shotgun, bearing an obliterated serial number, that the firearm was not manufactured in North Carolina, and thus must have traveled in interstate and foreign commerce to have been found in the State of North Carolina.

10. Based on all the facts set forth above, I believe that probable cause exists to find that Elijah Chase GORLA has violated Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(k), possession of a firearm with serial number obliterated.

/S William S. Hairston Jr.

William S. Hairston Jr.

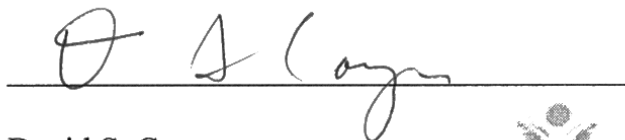
Special Agent

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Dated: July 8, 2021

Pursuant to Rule 4.1 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, the affiant appeared before me via reliable electronic means (telephone), was placed under oath, and attested to the contents of this Affidavit.

Signed: July 8, 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D S Cayer", is written over a horizontal line.

David S. Cayer
United States Magistrate Judge

